

~~Top Secret~~**USSR: Hint at More Flexibility on INF**

The chief Soviet INF negotiator hinted this week that Moscow might be more flexible if the US offered certain new proposals, but he stressed he was not authorized to offer new Soviet proposals.

Soviet Ambassador Kvitsinskiy said privately that, if the US would propose an "equal reductions scheme," Moscow might reduce its SS-20 force to 120 launchers in the western USSR and could consider compensation for future increases in French and British systems in future negotiations. He said, however, that Moscow would not agree to any US INF deployment and would not offer to reduce the SS-20 force to 54—a figure that would equate to current British and French warheads—because of opposition in the Soviet military.

In addition, Kvitsinskiy provided details on that part of the offer made by General Secretary Andropov on 27 October that dealt with aircraft. He suggested an aggregate total of 300 to 400 aircraft and a willingness to exclude US F-4s, F-16s, FB-111s, and some carrier-based aircraft, as well as the European Tornado.

Comment: Kvitsinskiy's hint of further Soviet flexibility appears designed to force the US to choose among three alternatives:

- Reject the latest Andropov offer, which could be used to justify a Soviet walkout in Geneva before 22 November.
- Accept the Soviet approach in the talks, which would accommodate Moscow's basic goals of preventing US INF deployment and securing compensation for current British and French missiles and warheads.
- Postpone deployment while negotiations proceed.

The Soviet negotiator first broached the SS-20 figure of 120 and deferral of the British and French modernization issue privately on 26 October. That was the same day he presented the proposal by Andropov to reduce the SS-20 force in the western USSR to approximately 140.

Kvitsinskiy, by ruling out reductions to 54 SS-20 launchers and suggesting 120, may have been attempting to elicit from the US a figure within that range that might be negotiable as long as NATO does not deploy. The suggested deferral of the British and French modernization issue appears designed to get US recognition in the present talks of the Soviet right to compensation. The Soviet negotiator's comments on aircraft probably were intended to probe the extent of US professed flexibility on this issue.

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